

Youth Corner!

“The youth of Maharashtra are the key to our future...” (anonymous).

Day 2: July 4th Saturday

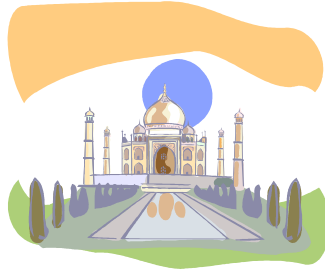
I knew that today was going to be the busiest day of all, but I couldn't help but laze around as early as I was forced to awaken. My mind and body were arguing considerably that morning; one urging to get up and devour the Pohe in store for us, the other begging for five more minutes in bed. Groggily, I dragged myself out of bed and dressed up in my “salwaar kameez” Nonetheless, my foot hit the pavement with a sprightly step that morning. I could faintly decipher the convention center before me, as I turned the curb.

For breakfast this morning, there was Pohe, and a surprise laddoo! I ate everything except the laddoo, pocketing it for later. Next our group met up. What to do? What to do? We all had that line running through our heads. After a short, interesting game of kemps, we stopped by the Carnival, but later realized that it was geared towards younger children. Therefore, we resorted to playing cards until lunch. Then, we all went separate ways, resolving to meet sometime later. For lunch, we enjoyed Nagpuri food, which, I would say was one of my favorites! The Varhadi Chicken in particular was quite tasty!

Following lunch, I was faced with even more choices. There was another play, Divasa Tu Ratri Mee, which narrated the life of a couple, in which the wife could see during the day while the husband could see during the night. It sounded quite enthralling. We could also view Seattle Vadyavrunda or Mee Shivaji Raje Bolatoy. After a good bout of consideration, more than usual I may add, Shriyash and I decided to go for the movie while aai and baba, whose interest was caught by the drama, attended Divasa Tu Ratri Mee.

Near the entrance, a man stood shaking hands and posing for pictures with “fans”. I wondered who he was, but before I could inquire, my parents entered the theater, almost frightening us with their sudden presence. Unfortunately for them, the drama had been a bore, so they had joined us. By this time, my curiosity was getting the better of me, and I wanted to introduce myself to the man. Just then, Baba recognized him. In fact, he was really main actor in the movie Mee Shivaji Raje Bolatoy! I was shaking with excitement! I'd finally be meeting famous actor, in person! Baba introduced us (as if he had been a fast friend of his) and we exchanged a few general words in conversation. I thought it very amusing that I would be viewing him in the movie within a few minutes. As we returned to our seats, the lights dimmed and the film began.

In the end, as I reflected upon the movie, I decided I hadn't expected any of it. I had thought, at first that it would be about a warrior, maybe an action movie according to the title. In contrast, the theme of it had been that Maharashtrians should be proud of their backgrounds and hold their heads up high. Set in modern India, it narrated the story of a Marathi man whose family had been exploited because of their nationality. He fought for their rights to the end and never gave up hope. I was really, truly touched by the movie. It summed up the thoughts of many Maharashtrians while threatening many commonly held beliefs. The gripping tale was perfectly depicted during the perfect time period. Within me, a voice shouted, "Strong and fierce, we shall stand as a state, forevermore. Jai Maharashtra!"



I checked my watch, surprised to see that it was nearly 3 o'clock. Hurriedly, I skimmed the schedule for any show titles. For a moment, the colors on the paper bounced back, as if the words had been missing. This was no time for my eyes to malfunction! That day I put "get glasses" at the top of my list.

It was then that my mom and dad, younger brother and I decided to separate and attend different programs. We took leave of one another when, all of a sudden, we saw we were approaching a long line of people. Curiously, I asked one of the people what all of the excitement was for. I saw that they were only admitting people by groups of five. Surely this must be an impressive show! I told Shriyash to quickly save a spot for me in the line, as I rushed for a drink of water. When I returned, the line had died down. Shriyash had left the line, apparently because I hadn't showed up. I shot him one of those irritated looks and scrambled toward the front of the shortening line at the same time. Finally, after ages, it seemed, of incessant nagging (thanks to Shriyash- the brother) and complaining, we were admitted. Shriyash, obviously cranky that afternoon, agreed to accompany me only on the terms that we would leave in ten minutes. We found that the room was chock full when we entered. Quietly, we sat down, the beautiful tunes floating to our ears. Swaragandha, the program, had apparently been such a hit that morning, that this was their second show. A family friend of ours, named Nachiket was playing the percussion role while his father was playing the violin. As a violin player, the program caught my interest in a moment. Still, even without the violin, the show was wonderfully played and a great pastime. For a moment before we left, I listened to the "tabla" playing. The musicians reminded me of forest creatures. The singer's voice, like a lark, rode above the clouds and wavered over a high note. I was in awe. As there was another unique program next, my parents called right then and told us to hurry to the program they were viewing. Reluctantly, I burst out of the room.

When I first looked back on the trip, I wanted to say that the movie was the highlight of the trip, but I'd slap myself for it if I ever did. For, the final performance of the day was such a stunning performance that I'll remember it for the rest of my life.

At eight that evening, I was scrambling through the packed halls, searching frantically for any familiar faces, but without luck. Finally, after about ten minutes, I came across my mother talking with one of her friends at the end of the line. I guessed it to be about a mile and a half long. I pondered what the line was for. When I finally realized what was going on, a little spark ignited within me, happiness shrouding my soul. Today was the day I had been waiting for – the reason I'd come to the convention. It had been such an exhilarating thought that I had to take a few breaths to calm myself down. I couldn't believe it! In the next few hours (I wished it'd be the next few minutes) I would be attending a concert of the greatest "Mahagayaka" in Maharashtra. The most revered musician in her division. And who may you ask is this great musician? For whom billions of Americans through the states would travel to see? Asha Bhosle.

Finally, at about 10 o'clock PM, people began pouring into the huge stadium, where the welcome ceremony had been held only the previous morning. The concert was due to start any minute, I thought excitedly. It seemed like a dream to me. I think the most exciting thing was the thought that I'd actually be hearing Asha Bhosle's sonorous voice in person. People waited the moment when the concert would begin. Already, the program had been delayed about an hour. I sighed. Sitting ahead of us, we could hear roars of voices, impatiently waiting for the performance to begin. There's Indians for you!

The room was still vibrating with intense noise as we sat waiting ten minutes later. I heard people complaining exasperatedly, "Kiti wel waat baghaichi ahe?" I was thinking the same thing.

At last, a tide of silence passed through the audience, as voices turned to whispers, complaints to scowls. I peeked up, lights shining into my eyes. A man entered, introduced the performance and waited for applause. Then, an older woman came in the spotlight, clad in a dazzling turquoise sari sparkling in the brightness. I almost shrieked with excitement as "Asha Tai" entered the stage. The tabla player played and the other musicians joined in to create a harmony of voices, only to be followed by the queen singer herself.

As the program progressed, I became more and more involved in the performance. I soaked it all in, realizing that enjoying it now would only bring me joy later on, as I would think back and recall the songs I heard. I wasn't looking for any meaning in the songs, as I usually did in concerts. I simply listened solely for listening, humming when I recognized the tunes, just as a child plays just for enjoyment and animals hunt for living. Just to listen. Those familiar songs brought me such inexpressible happiness that sitting there was like bliss.

As the night sped by, Asha Bhosle sang such beautiful tunes exceptionally. The emotion and feeling she brought with each line was enviable. Despite what others kept saying about her fading voice, I truly felt that she sang vigorously and passionately. Even at 75 years old, she made the tunes fun for everybody to hear, which is what's very important in music. I heard my singing teacher amazed at her exceptional voice. Indeed, no one can argue, she's a legendary singer, with a legendary voice. Among her songs, "Hath nakko lau majhya sadi la" was my most favorite. In the entire show, the highlight was "Kombdi Palali" which was such a high beat song that it excited me and left me hoping to dance.

That night, I slept dreaming of the wonderful melodies I'd heard. I slept, as they say, like a baby.

*****Thanks for reading! *****

We want to hear from you! If you are a Marathi youth who has been to a really cool Maharashtrian event/program, please share your experience! If you would like to publish your thoughts, I would be more than happy to publish it in the next edition of the “Youth Corner” Just email your description to: supriya1111@yahoo.com. Hope to hear about your experiences soon!
=D

~Supriya Jalukar